

REWRITE



The Magazine of Effective Writing

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"BE STRONG, O MY SOUL, BE STRONG"

The problem of how to manage himself, that he may do as much writing as possible and achieve as high a quality as he is capable of, is one of the most serious problems a writer ever faces. It is infinitely more important than the inability to write any special article or to work out a particular plot. For it is a continuous problem that remains with him throughout his life, and while momentary crises make it harder or more difficult to bear, it is always changing subtly, depending on one's increasing age, gathered experience and most of all, maturing character. For it is something that only a writer himself can face and tame.

The picture of a temperamental author trying to get started on a piece and sitting at a typewriter desk entirely surrounded on the floor by torn up first sheets, is an amusing one that never fails to make laymen laugh.. It is a serious matter, however, for writers some of whom never escape from the convulsive fear that they will not be able to do a day's job. Most of us graduate from the apprentice lack of experience, from the failure of our instinct and senses to come to our rescue simply because they have had no previous practice. We may have our good days & our bad ones, our cycles of energy and power to synchronize strong feeling with craft intelligence. But we have captured a certain ability to express ourselves or take refuge in research, planning or just cleaning up a desk.

The reason why in spite of all arguments to the contrary, I urge editors to use discretion in throwing back mss. with an impersonal rejection slip and often a disfigured ms. is something that a friend of mine, the late James Thayer Addison, for many years an Episcopalian minister, has expressed very beautifully in his day-by-day comment for "FORWARD", the Episcopalian manual of daily Bible reading. For Monday, Sept. 28th, he said:

"In our lives the worst of disasters is—to give way to distrust of our mission, to yield to doubt of our purposes in life, for that surrender cuts under everything else & dries up life at its source." (I think that he must have had a special feeling for writers when he wrote that months ago before he died.)

Yet it is important to realize that every soul upon this earth faces the same universal doubt and fear at one time, or perhaps many times. Remember John Galsworthy's poignant phrase in "The Forsyte Saga": "The secret sense of self-importance without which none of us can survive." And Mr. Addison did not end his comment there. He added:

"When Jesus so doubted He pressed on, because the solution of doubt lies in action.

If we put ourselves to the test and act as if the vision of our mission were true, in the process of experiment will come the rewarding experience which confirms, and ratifies, our moments of faith."

Those are the two hardest lessons for every writer to learn. But learn them he must. First, that however small and unimportant he may seem in the scheme of literary sales or glory, he has a mission. And second, that as a result of this knowledge, it is our stern and unrelenting duty to stand fast, to rigorously defend, and maintain our visions in spite of whatever irritations and adversity come our way.

The ancient saying has it: "Know thyself." Elva and I spend a good part of our time in encouraging writers, helping them to understand this problem of managing one's self.. It should be appreciated that here again, a subtlety creeps in. The details of everyone's private and family life are that person's business alone. Sometimes the rare friend or a counsellor may offer advice. But for the most part it should always be hands off.

There is, however, that mysterious alchemy by which on occasion we raise ourselves, in moments of distrust and fear and weakness above the clutching, corroding fingers of a negative force that would drag us down. It is wise and prudent for each of us to build within ourselves a strong driving force and self-discipline sufficient to continue to be of use and give us headway in the gales that inevitably will assail us as we cover life's course.

But since none of us are self-sufficient within ourselves alone, it is also wise & prudent to seek supporting strength wherever we may find it. Speaking personally, I've found it in my family, in my friends, my reading, my everyday contacts. Perhaps I am unusually fortunate, but I am sure that I receive, over the years, a great deal of strength for my work, my writing and my enjoyment of life from the hundreds of writers and others who treasure our gifts of friendship enough, to respond with "visits" by mail or in person, during which they share with us their trials and tribulations, and the means by which in leisure or haste they have met them. That is the kind of tribute that no teacher ever can hope to buy, or—forget. It is good medicine when the rainy days come, as they surely must. Medicine that is free to all, but which few of us value or use enough.

Most of all a writer's faith, not alone in himself, but in nature and his God, can always be strengthened by the discovery that he is likely to find that supporting strength in unexpected places, if he but keep his eyes & ears open. From long experience I no longer marvel that whenever I need ideas they come from everywhere. I have but to wait & think!

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THE AGE OF TENSIONS

I had a bull session this summer with one of my friends, a learned teacher of economics. He claimed we Americans had "never had it so good". Proved it with statistics. I am not sure I agree. Materially, probably yes. But as regards lasting values, happy & leisurely living? We live longer, drive harder and wear out faster. Our national security, it appears, is much reduced. In an era of a thousand fantastic gadgets more people have divorces and moral or nervous break-downs.. Looking back, we may find we have exchanged true freedom for apparent ease of living and innumerable tensions.

The first great tension is war. War is always with us. But whereas our elders did experience half a century of comparative peace between the Civil War and World War I, we've had continuous unrest and increasing feudal brutality for forty years. War can be avoided if enough people of enough nations demand it. World security and relaxation of this initial tension will never come through armed might alone.

The second great tension is Soviet political aggression. The fact that it is political, not diplomatic, must be firmly established in the minds of freedom loving men, & the ruthless plot of a few power-hungry bandits to pillage civilization must be smashed forever. And this without building up demagogues, and creating police states on this side of the Iron Curtains. This fear will not be relaxed until brave, courageous men seize the initiative and disarm the mad men.

The third great tension of our times lies in too much government. There are many good

men in our Congress and executive branches. But so long as we, the tax-payers permit our representatives to overdraw and function on an insolvent basis, leaving resulting deficits to us to raise the best way we can, so long will we continuously lose our heritage of free men. We must demand that our representatives must live within their income or go without—as they do at home. This tension can be relaxed any time we have brains & the will to exorcize it.

The fourth great tension is too much bigness. In spite of the pathetic attempts the great industrial empires and labor unions & other forms of bigness in our lives make to prove that the power and the glory rests in the hands of the democratic many, too many, many people in this country owe what little security they have to the men all up & down the line of management who pull the strings

In earlier days a man and woman worked as hard as they pleased. Usually it was as the saying was, "from dawn to dusk" and the rewards were meager. But a family was its own master. It could pull up stakes and go seek gold in California or rich new soil in Ohio or the prairies if it wished. That is difficult to do today. It takes two pay-checks at least today to support a family. And whereas few persons had money or needed it a generation or two ago, few men today, are able to exchange the weekly sure money for freedom to earn on speculation. This tension, however, can and is being gradually relaxed by those brave, independent souls who live in the country, raise their own food and/or develop part-time avocations.

The fifth tension is a form of economic & feudal serfdom created by our fancied needs for all kinds of gadgets and servants, such as the automobile, automatic, dishwasher, & personal adornments, all of which are too often designed to wear out or quickly become, stylistically, obsolete. Some of these have become essentials in today's world, others have not. But this is in part a personalized rat-race, it creates serious tensions in the lives of many families.

On either side of this tension, you might say, are other resulting tensions. Nations struggling for independence are only searching for a way out from this economic slave-master relationship. In some cases they are under-developed, backward nations the populations of which are hungry. In other cases they are further developed, but still are a forgotten man so far as industry's inability to distribute piled up surpluses in certain world areas are concerned.

On the other side there is the problem of so-called "juvenile delinquency". In reality there is no such problem. These boys and girls come largely from broken families and those where both parents are working, where in a word there is no parental interest, or supervision. To sum it up, most of the major tensions are solvable by creative living.

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HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

Julie Batchelor

Children's Book: Harcourt, Brace & Co.
(This month her second book is published and her third accepted for 1954!)

Doris Marston

Article: Lewiston, Me., JOURNAL
Fillers: GUIDEPOSTS (Aug.) PATHFINDER &
FARM JOURNAL (Sept.)

Rebecca Phillips

Articles: C. S. MONITOR.

Stanley M. Kenney

Story: PARISH VISITOR.

Mary Grant Charles

Poems: The GRADE TEACHER, Denver POST'S
Empire Magazine, OREGONIAN.

Frances Durland

Short Stories: FORWARD, AMERICAN BAPTIST
Serial: AMERICAN BAPTIST (2-part).

Helen Langworthy

Articles: STRAIGHT, C.S.MONITOR, & Grand
Rapids PRESS.

Story: Canadian Red Cross JUNIOR.

Sketch: ST. ANTHONY'S MONTHLY.

Alice Margaret Huggins

Book: WESTMINSTER PRESS (October release).

Lydia Lion Roberts

Articles: The WRITER, C.S.MONITOR.

Agnes C. Lomax

Light Verse: FAMILY TIMES.

Ber Temple

Short Shorts: Boston POST (and fillers)

Marjorie S. Scheuer

Poems: C.S.MONITOR, N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE.

Mary Grant Charles (More)

Poems: CHRISTIAN HERALD, QUATRAIN DIGEST
Anecdote: QUOTE.
Book: Lamb Family (Genealogy).

Florence Reine Garrett

Poems: WINGS, COUNTRY POET.

George B. Petit

Articles: AM. SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

Marjorie McClellan Flint

Article: PROFITABLE HOBBIES.

Mary Lothrop

Poems: QUATRAIN DIGEST, arizona SUN and
Boston POST. (Also fillers to last.)

Helen Houston Boileau

Fillers: PROFITABLE HOBBIES.

Agnes C. Lomax (More)

Limerick Prize: National Safety Council.

Send in your report. Fatten your average!

AN EXPERIENCE ROUND TABLE

Our WCS Family members find many ways for helping each other. Round robins, correspondence, technical advice and criticism, etc. One of the nicest and most novel though was the way Marjorie McClellan Flint carried on Mrs. Lillian Stickney's column, Nature Notes, for the Vermont Newspaper Corp. while Lillian was ill. Some day those who exploit nationalism, will learn that no nation can go it alone.

MODERN RETAILING (and STATIONER), Dudley Taylor, 250 5th Ave., NYC, reported recently, "We are loaded with stories at present."

The PUBLISHERS' WEEKLY, 62 West 45th St., NYC 36, started in its Aug. 22nd issue a feature of interest to writers: its own "Guide to Current Titles and Their Meanings".

THE title of a book is an important factor in attracting potential purchasers. But the title of a book can mean a great deal more to the author than it does to the bookseller or librarian who is then put to it to make the author's intention clear to a puzzled customer. If the title is taken from a quotation from the work of another author, the general public cannot all be counted on to remember it with any degree of accuracy; or the bookseller may have a pretty good idea of what the title means, but not quite good enough an idea to make it all crystal-clear to the shopper. This season a number of titles are taken from the names of rather obscure and therefore bothersome flora and fauna. This season, in fact, there are an unusual number of obscure titles.

Here is a sage bit of advice about titles that led off the opening column. The various persons, in their respective trades, who merchandise your book to the general public, must know what is the point of it, otherwise it's likely to be a dud.

Think this over.

The Value of Friendships. Edward W. Ludwig told me not long ago about an odd experience he had. He submitted a ms. to an editor and found the latter had formerly handled his ms. while working for an agent. It did not hurt either chap, the fact that they had previously worked together.

In the book and magazine offices there is notoriously a high and frequent turn-over—especially among the younger editors. Some change their positions; some move to different firms or magazines. And some become active in a different medium: agency, radio & TV, etc. Writers should learn never to wonder at the unexpected. More important, ever to keep their contacts sharp and bright. You never know when friendships are going to develop or dissolve and perhaps form again. A wise writer learns to keep a little address book and "follow" as many of the contacts he makes over the years as possible. Only this summer a chance acquaintance I made at a conference five years or more ago, brought one of the most stimulating experiences which I have ever had.

Mary Pfeiffer, assistant to William Heyliger, is taking over his work at WESTMINSTER PRESS as editor of trade books in juvenile field. She was formerly with YOUNG BUCKS. Mr. Heyliger resigned because of ill health.

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FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

THE POETS WORKSHOP

THE BIRD SCULPTOR

Chisel the cherry-wood until the wing,
Dips to the whitened wave, all time and motion
Suspended, and the wild wind's bickering...

Devise the loneliness, the long devotion;
Carve from the apple-bough the cormorant's cry.
The kinship of the seabird and the ocean.

Feathers and flesh your birds are patterned by,
But these are fairer, for the salt air lingers;
Eyes follow wings continuing to fly.

Out of the solid block, the soarers, singers,
The lovers of the tides, manoeuvring;
The screaming and still. Under your fingers
The seagull's plunge becomes a lasting thing—
Stay the tiny sandpiper's hurrying.

Eleanor Thayer

Our apologies to the author and the Workshop for allowing an error to creep into the printing of the poem in the last issue. We have corrected it in this issue. (In line 7 we left the "s" off "birds".) Any comments received on that score will have to be discounted. It was our typographical error, not the author's misuse of grammar.

The first comment comes from Enola Chamberlin, whose poem we discussed a few issues ago. She says: "This is a lovely thing on the whole. The first two lines & the first word in line three are wonderful, but (oh, that but!) I am doubtful of the meaning of the remainder of the third line. Is the wild wind's bickering chiseled or suspended? Devise the loneliness' is fine, but I don't understand at all 'the long devotion'. Whose devotion to what? Then, can one carve a cormorant's cry? Or am I being too literal?"

"Evidently the sculptor is watching living birds. That is fine. Seems as if the 12th line is short an accent besides being rough. And there are too many ING rhymes. Moreover, the last line is hard to read. Somehow, it does not give a satisfactory ending. It is not strong enough and the word "hurrying" is not a good ending word, I think."

"Since there is good material here and, on the whole has been handled well, I am quite sure the author, after she receives the suggestions of the readers, will be able to revise and place this poem in a good magazine."

Charles E. Ross: "The image is unique and the first two lines are swell, but I do not

like 'wild wind bickering'. Has nothing to do with the bird. To me the poem is too loose. It seems another attempt to do too much with the sonnet. The poet has a flare for imagery and description. I saw the sculptured sea bird in the first two lines, but I lost sight of it when asked to examine the sculptor's entire studio; nor did I want to examine it in so short a poem as a sonnet.

"I should prefer a tighter unity—one image, one bird, one carving element. Let the sculptor work with sea-gull in cherry-wood. Don't try to direct his whole career."

Mary Grant Charles: "I like the choice of specific words in this original poem, & some of the lines, particularly lines 1 & 5. I like 'But these are fairer', though it might be questioned. Is art ever fairer than real life, nature? A period should end the next-to-the-last line statement, that has little to do with the last line imperative. The 'Stay' here is too much separated from preceding 'Chisel', 'Devise', and 'Carve'. For me the main trouble with this poem is a mixture of verb moods. It would be more effective were the imperative adhered to throughout. If polished a little, 'The Bird Sculptor' can be made a really beautiful poem, one I would like to see in The COUNTRY POET."

Bessie H. Hartling is thinking along similar lines with Mrs. Charles as regards "But these are fairer". She says: "The mental pictures are wonderful. It has been said we've got to see nature on canvas to appreciate it. This idea is brought out in the poem. The bird sculptor has caught a fleeting picture from Nature, and held it through the medium of his art. The gazer never tires of enjoying still life. He will understand and enjoy the real scene when he sees it again."

"The C. S. MONITOR, GOOD HOUSEKEEPING, or S. E. PCST may accept this poem."

The COUNTRY POET was also suggested as an appropriate market by Theda L. Pobst.

Zola Lazo: "I like the rhyme, the word pictures, choice of words, and the title. I'd rearrange some lines."

Clarence C. Adams: "This poem is a beautiful picture but it is like a cut-up picture puzzle that has some of the parts in wrong, or ill-advised positions that leave one wondering 'where next'?"

"I would suggest a rearrangement of lines to create a follow through of the thought. I have tried to do this in the following version. (The underlining shows changes in wording and punctuation.) It throws the rhyme off a bit, but the flow of meaning is improved. With a bit of rewording the rhyme can be corrected. I think Mrs. Thayer would have little trouble in selling the rearranged poem"

(This kind of experimentation is helpful, healthy workshop exercise.)

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THE BIRD SCULPTOR

Iva Lennard: "I have read and re-read the poem by Eleanor Thayer, and personally it's confusing to me. I think she has a good story there, if she made a little clearer the underlying idea, and smoothed the rhythm."

Bessie H. Hartling: "I would eliminate in the title the word "The". The whole poem is addressed to the bird sculptor rather than about him."

We have some thoughtful comments this month, a nice balance between praise and suggested changes. I agree with Mr. Adams & Mrs. Lazo that a rearrangement of lines would improve the poem. Perhaps Mr. Ross would not mind examining the sculptor's studio so much if he had been shown the birds in general first—as Mr. Adams has indicated, and then been shown the three specific birds. Since the subject of the poem is the bird sculptor I think it is not out of order to see more than one of the birds, provided the images are clear and we feel a sense of orderliness, rather than confusion.

As to "the wild wind's bickering" I disagree with Mr. Ross that it has no place and should be excluded from the poem. For me it greatly adds to the picture of the birds. I feel sure with Mr. Adams that the author intended it to go with the verb "suspended" & I approve of his correction of the inversion.

"The long devotion" I take to mean the devotion of the birds to the sea. Since the bird sculptor is devising it, it must not be his own devotion. However, if this phrase is ambiguous, it is ambiguous in a good way. I think the sculptor must surely exhibit long devotion to his work in order to do it well—so well that his birds are "fairer".

I believe that we should take, "carve the cormorant's cry" as being figurative. I am not familiar with the voice of the cormorant, but I can, figuratively, hear a gull scream just by conjuring up a mental picture of the sea bird. I think it is that sort of thing, that the author intended. The sculptor's bird is so alive that we can almost hear it cry.

But I am in complete agreement with Enola

Chamberlin when she says the last line isn't satisfying. As Mrs. Charles says, the "Stay" is too far from the other imperatives to be effective. Physically, "hurrying" is a poor word to end with, because of the two syllables that are unaccented at the end of it. A good picture word, however. The word "stay" itself is good, too, were it more closely & clearly related to its associates. The irregular rhythm of that last line also helps to increase its anti-climactic quality. The author should give us a line with strong regular rhythm ending with an iambic instead of a pyrrhic foot. A line that would also continue to maintain the clear picture that the original line presents.

In line ten I would like to see the author use a picture verb such as "emerge", instead of leaving it in that sentence unspoken. To include a verb would not only make grammatical construction correct, but would let the picture come alive as Mrs. Thayer obviously has done so well throughout the rest of the poem.

Yes, I agree with the others that this poem has possibilities, and in a wide variety of markets. The many women's markets should be worth a try. And Dan Kelly's thoughtful, interesting (non-pay) pages in The PINE CONE is another likely one.

Next time we discuss Mary Billings' poem:

THE QUARREL

No word of ours
Released the echoes in this room
Where we are strangely silent.
From her walnut frame
My crayoned aunt
Regards our deafness—
Head bent a little, considers
Our obstinate pride.
(For thirty lonely years
She wore her pride like a jewel.)
The walls are shouting at us—
Your ears must ring with the din,
My heart will burst
With the sound in this room;
Yet neither of us will hearken;
Will say, "I was wrong—forgive me!"

Mary Billings

Mary Billings says: "As for my autobiography as a poet there is little to say. I've been writing verse since I was nine, and I've had a small percentage of it published. My great ambition—12 lines in the S.E. POST.

"The QUARREL has never been sent out to a market before, but did make the rounds in a Maine Poetry Fellowship Round Robin, where I got some good ideas for revising it."

Send in your constructive comments on Mary Billings' poem. Deadline: November 10th. As REWRITE will be late this month, send them in after this deadline, too. She'll get them &

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we will give you the benefit of them later.

Remember that we pay \$1 for each poem used. Poems must be accompanied by a comment. A brief note about your experience, and the helpful suggestions you work up for current poem we are discussing. Comments we receive after the deadline are forwarded to the author, even if they cannot be included in the workshop.

Forgive us for not acknowledging last issue's Workshop contributions. They were appreciated, but the summer is the time every writer needs to play hooky from the typewriter. And for us, to get out in the garden in the corn and tomatoes, or to go swimming, & have hot dog roasts with our youngster. Yesterday we put up curtains in his latest project: a playhouse converted from an old hen-coop. When he gets a coat of paint on it, even the hens won't recognize it.

Mr. Wallace sends his thanks for the comments on his "Houses at Dawn".

SOME NEWS AND COMMENT

As has been our custom for several years, we have given two prizes for the AM. Poetry League Contest. Sadie Fuller Seagrave & Gerrie Hunter, both of Iowa, are the winners of a year's subscription each to REWRITE. It's good to have them in the NCS Family.

The Batting Average Column (More):

Rose Labrie
article: VERMONT LIFE.

Julia F. Polinski
articles: Valley NEWS (W. Lebanon, N.H.)

Helen Langworthy (More)
Story: ST. ANTHONY'S Monthly.

Julia Anna Cook
Poems: The COUNTRY POET, AM. WEAVE.
article: Sanford (Me.) TRIBUNE.

IMPORTANT NOTE: dial telephone service is now in operation in Lunenburg. So we have a new telephone number:

LU 2 6196.

We mourn the loss of the old and simple 3 figured number, even though it meant giving a crank to call central and ring off.

"Free Criticism". The English WRITER (August issue) carried a sarcastic "leader" ridiculing the idea of free criticism from editors in place of the cold, impersonal non-informatory rejection slip. As one time defenders of the idea, we believe there is an argument against personalized comment about the great mass of "impossible" mss. continually thrown at the heads of editors, without thought by the authors, just on chance. However we note with approval an increasing tendency for editors to why they reject.

A WARM FRIEND OF WRITERS DIES

On one of the last of the warm summerdays just before autumn settled down over our valley, my mother slipped away to her long deferred rest. She had been an invalid for almost thirteen years, the last eight of them spent in a hospital some 30 miles from us. A sad fact for her and for us was that she had been able, being bed-ridden, to see Billy—her only grandchild, only twice.

Devoted to her Church, we are happy in the knowledge that her name is engraved among a faithful little company of her friends on a door in the altar guild room of historic old Christ Church in Cambridge, where she served lovingly for a good many years. We hope to fill her wish to take her place in a family burial plot, part of a fertile farm her ancestors purchased from the Indians. As a boy I recall seeing their burial mounds, now removed, that neighbored close beside headstones dedicated to my grand- and great grandparents. It is a pretty hay meadow beside the winding course of the Salmon Falls River along which my mother sometimes accompanied, as a young girl, her older friend, the Maine writer, Sarah Orne Jewett.

She was always a gay, brave spirit touched with a love for living and a quiet sense of humor that crept up on the unwary, usually catching them off guard. There was a merry gleam in her eyes as she loosed her well phrased shafts of wit. Many are the persons in all walks of life who crossing swords of laughter with her, found her a worthy adversary. Elva knew her only after she was sick, but there was always a softness in her voice as she comforted "Mother Alice". To all her nurses and fellow patients she was: "Little Alice". God bless her and keep her!

MAN'S GREAT UNCHARTED SEA

The September issue of TOWN JOURNAL, formerly PATHFINDER, contains an excellent feature on the subject of intuition. It tells in simple language where and how many of our ideas develop. It applies to writers, whose use of the sub-conscious is referred to (in the article).

I have often thought that less scientific and accurate research has been expended during the whole of man's life on this planet, on the subject of the mind and the heart of man than any other phase of our life. Much of the superficial thinking about religion, I believe, is simply a means of befuddling, obscuring and covering up man's ignorance of his heritage of faith.

No man can face death or watch it silently knock on a loved one's door without wondering what lies beyond the great door. No one can work closely with the drives of Nature to create and reproduce without having some kind of faith well up inside of him... Writers who touch infinity each time they do a "story", should explore this mystery more.

RE-WRITE

A POST AUTHOR TALKS SHOP

One of the high points of the Maine Writers' Conference was the two-day appearance, and active participation, of Charles Rawlings, SAT. EVE. POST writer, whose piece on Monhegan was published the week after the Conference (Aug. 15th issue). An outdoor man, a big man, although a smaller and often startling presentation of Winnie Churchill (same pudgy features, same indrawn chin), Rawlings likes to talk about writing. And for two days, beginning with wonderful conversation at meals, then a two-hour evening talk, and later more conversation and contributed know-how in at least one workshop, he gave generously of a long experience. A fine guy. No mistake.

His talk ranged over his lifetime career. One of the nice things about him is a willingness to talk frankly about his failures, as well as his successes, to talk objectively with no bravado. Writers can learn a lot from his vivid and visualizing phrasing, his practical feeling for detail. He told about Ring Lardner telling him to take a "general course" instead of specializing on journalism at college. And to make use of a writer's ego. "You learn in your deepest heart, what amuses or interests you, will interest other people."

He characterized his first sale as strictly "illegitimate". He wrote the best he knew how about the Greek sponge fleet in Florida. The ATLANTIC MONTHLY gave him a rejection—impersonal and brief. He wrote to the editor, Ellery Sedgwick, claiming an acquaintance that did not actually exist. By one of those lucky breaks that sometimes happen, the editor bought the story.

Rawlings thereafter experienced the growing pains that usually follow a too "premature" success. He endured a hungry period and felt the frightening sense of writing for a single person, when a national circulation, for he made the POST shortly after that ATLANTIC sale, begins to read your stuff. But that first acceptance drew the attention of Carl Brandt, who became his agent; & led him to a fiction story for the POST.

He was fortunate enough to learn under the great Horace Lorimer, who stressed the need first and foremost of story values. And he learned also the importance of writing what he wanted to write, and not sticking at the same thing too long. Rawlings mentioned the suicide of Guy Gilpatrick, who used the same popular character until it filled him with a terrifying boredom and sense of futility. He told, too, of learning about this and writing well from the legendary Max Brand (Henry Faust), one of the great story-tellers, a man who was killed in World War II, yet has an apparently unlimited production of hitherto unpublished stories being released periodically by his book publisher.

Rawlings spoke at some length about a bitter contempt of many slick writers for lit-

erary magazines, and vice versa. He stressed this hostility that resembles Tin Pan Alley's hatred of the Symphonic orchestras, of Park Ave. editors' contempt for belles-lettres, and the need of the good writer to absorb the best of both extremes. He told without cynicism of the ATLANTIC rejecting another one of his features, this time a sketch of a cold water cruise. "It was a beautiful February storm in North Atlantic fishing waters when the ATLANTIC gave it the heave-ho, saying it had too many 'jewel tones' in it, the POST bought it, had Gordon Grant illustrate it and used it to 'open the book'."

Illustrating the distrust of the two contrasting fields of writing, Rawlings quoted Carl Brandt as telling him, "If you get the urge of so many commercial magazine writers to write literary stuff, don't tell me about it." And, according to Rawlings, the former editor of the ATLANTIC felt so strongly the exact reverse, he (Ellery Sedgwick) ordered all agents' envelopes returned unopened.

But that was why Charley Rawlings went off by himself without consulting the POST, and did his "jewel toned" piece about the fishermen of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, and offered it to the ATLANTIC for a fraction of the money he subsequently got from the POST. He wants desperately to write well, to do just one story that will be remembered. In private conversations with some of us he showed this; showed it every minute in his very warm interest in the Conference and all the less experienced writers there. Showed it, I think most of all, in his tremendous appreciation and respect for his craft, for people in and out of it, and his evident enjoyment of every moment of living that his own life touches.

He spoke feelingly of editors. Didn't use to like them. Then he met Lorimer and found he had an "appetite for good writing." Learned you could write as well as you could and he would appreciate it. Rawlings humorously described a typical POST luncheon, to which he was invited as a "prize cow—only I was a small one." But Lorimer took him in hand, & educated him like a father. Showed his concern for the fading Hergesheimer, whom Rawlings worshipped as a stylist.

In memorable detail Rawlings told of a story the POST edited for him with genius. It was the story of the Priest in the tiny fishing town, who sought to bring Garge back to marry the mother of a baby son he had spawned. Garge was at sea. When the story eventually was published, Garge returned, but now two were under suspicion, and one of them a shipmate whom Garge knew the sea would never give up as one of its own.

Rawlings believes now that stories seldom are cut to hurt. He himself has stopped doing titles. He sent his lobster article out to the POST merely as the "Monhegan piece". In cutting he thinks editors "cut to the quick" cut to advantage. Without losing anything.

REWRITE

Editors, Rawlings says, are "people you hate when you are young." He told an amusing incident during the war when Gen. Douglas Mc-Arthur in clearing one of his POST articles personally edited it, even to changes in the spelling and punctuation.

Carl Brandt warned him of the danger of a small minority of editors who feel the need of getting their fingers in the dough of creation. The kind of editors you want to kill! Rawlings paid tribute to Brandt for teaching him to write four hours a day regularly. "If you do that, keep writing stories, some day you will do that 'one good, good story'. You won't know which it is. I won't know but one of them will be 'good'."

"How right he was," exclaimed Rawlings. He told how Brandt helped him with one story—"He told me to put a tail on it and then it could stand by itself. He made me think all of it out." To prove what an able agent his friend is, Rawling described the methods of the big slicks in dealing with agents. Each of the better known agents has a pile of mail waiting for the out-of-town magazines. The fiction buyers of these books follow a regular schedule in picking them up. "What have you for me this week?" Rawlings says: "Never has one of my stories that Brandt picked as POST material fallen off the pile."

Because he feels that writers, and editors also, should get out of New York, and get to know the people they write for, he has moved to Maine. He thinks of it as a dream state because more than any other, its interests, and those of its people, interest the readers in other states. But he is frank to admit that although he has lived there 7 years, he doesn't know how he feels about it; well enough, that is, to write too directly about it yet. He fears the danger of romanticizing and "horsing it up". He illustrated this by a story idea he has been playing around and has not done anything with, but believes is salable. Maine is as yet a not wholly digested experience. He is feeling his way with a piece now and then like the POST story about "Lobster Town".

Rawlings had little doubts about writers' conferences, however. Publicly, he expressed his enthusiasm for talking shop. In private conversations he commented that he had been spending too much time with people who praised his writing, not enough with craftsmen who talked the same language. He enjoyed plainly the stimulation and the intensiveness of the workshop discussions, the give-and-take. In his talk he alluded humorously to fan letters. And errors that in spite of careful research creep in occasionally. In one story he "luffed" a vessel when he ought to have "reached" it. This led him to a discussion of the mimeograph corrections every author sooner or later has to prepare & send out. Briefly, he traced his change with regard to fan letters.

At first he paid no attention to them and did not answer them. Then he wrote to a few—the ones that he liked, and which appealed to him. Now he answers them all. "Briskly for the most part," he explained, "but enough to answer their questions or comments and satisfy them." He told of some who seem merely to want to put an author in the wrong or show him up, argue with him, or convince him of some theory or philosophy. Of the others who are pleased or admiring. "Most of them say the wrong things, the things you'd like to hear." But taken as a whole they offer a writer a sense of the national circulation and the responsibility he assumes in writing for a great audience.

However, at Ocean Park, Charley Rawlings, a relaxed, listening figure, seemed happy and contented. He stayed much longer than he had to, rode off delightedly, after a lazy lunch to the consternation of the gaping summervisitors, perched high on the rear seat of Lew Dietz' jeep directly behind Betty Finnin of WOMAN'S DAY, who was also on her way "down" East to spend a week-end with an author. To a circle of admiring writers, it was a sign fraught with meaning, that all three of the good talkers about writing would fulfill an expressed hope to return next year for more of the same.

A WAY TO HELP WRITERS AND THE BLIND

Speaking of fan letters, REWRITE received a very appealing one recently. It came from Donald W. Hathaway, ass't. director of Hadley School for the Blind, 620 Lincoln Ave., Winnetka, Ill. He expressed interest in our Workshops, especially Elva's poetry column. He wishes that he could manage the expenses for making them available in Braille for the blind writers the School is in touch with in many parts of the country. (The School is a "National School of Tuition Free Home Study Courses for the Blind.")

Two years ago the Hadley School published a poetry anthology of about 100 poems which cost about \$260.00 for 250 copies. We started out with an annual publication in mind. If published oftener, it could be made more selective, and fewer copies would be needed. We kept copies in our library for future students, not knowing when another edition would be printed."

The School, founded by William Hadley and Dr. E.V.L.Brown in 1921, is now over thirty years old. Over 7,000 students have been instructed in 70 courses in all states and 29 foreign countries. REWRITE has been contributed by us to its library for a long period of years.

We heartily commend this worthy project of bringing poetry and short stories to so many blind poets. I hope that more fortunate members of the NCS Family may be inspired to offer their practical support & interest.

REWRITE

AN EDITOR AND AN AUTHOR TALK

Another memorable session at Ocean Park's pine grove conference center in Maine, was a panel discussion between Betty Finnin, fiction editor for WOMAN'S DAY, and Lew Dietz, writer in many fields, who has sold her five short stories. I have been privileged to see Betty talk about fiction many times. It was my first experience listening to Lew. Tall, mustachioed, a Maine man in his bushy hair, woodsman's shirt and shy manner, he doesn't speak with the fluent ease of some conference speakers. He thinks before he lets go, treasures his words, not reluctantly, but because he wants to say only what he is sure of for the moment. Stirred by the talk of the first day apparently, he tramped the beach alone, by night, a healthy tonic for any of us.

The conversation between Betty and Lew, a smooth and friendly one, ran overtime, filled an extra period scheduled for another author unable to appear. It drew good, practical questions and afforded material for discussion at lunch. The two speakers were effective foils for each other, drawing editor and writer out so as to show the differing viewpoints and problems. It was a valuable morning.

Lew started off by saying that a writer's first task is to ask himself: "Have you an idea? Emotionally is it yours?" He stressed the difference between mere representation, on the one hand, and a full blown story, one rounded out by art and craftsmanship. A story that "will be felt." Stories, he went on to explain, are like icebergs. They are rich & full with impact, but not room to say it all — they have implications, body below the surface. The author does not just copy life. He adds texture, clarity and meaning.

Betty commented on the tendency of larger slicks to pin point their stories to a readership "not over thirty-five". That is very constricting, she believes. She herself uses stories with older folk in them; desires to catch their interests and reflect life as seen through their eyes and minds.

Lew offered his opinion that perhaps writers are more natural in their handling of a child or older children because they're working from their own remembered experience. He remarked that "characters can't change their character in a short story. The space is too short. You can only show superficial change, not deep, basic changes. Yet some authors try to do that." He advised suggesting a certain character-trait. Then the story will hinge, so to speak, on that. "You can't go out on a limb, then saw it off," he smiled.

Someone asked what "off-trail" meant. Betty filled out Lew's "something very different" by saying that most slick editors want a plotted story and that while she accepts a less ordered type of story, the appeal of a plotted story never dims. Lew said the real

danger of the plotted story is that it will seem contrived.

I asked Lew and Betty to kick around, and bring out the difference between "Idea" and "Plot". Lew spoke of "theme", what a story's about. "This is often implied; the reader is not wholly aware of it, nor is the author—although the implications and the impact are clear to both when the story ends. In other words, it is something intangible, but nonetheless felt.

I gathered that both Betty and Lew think of "Idea" much as we here speak of "Situation". Lew, for instance, spoke of the beginning of a story as the most important part. "That's where the issue is joined and what is going to happen is foreshadowed. The first implications begin to appear." It is in a beginning, he added, that you become certain whether you have a strong idea or a weak one.

Betty told a specific instance of a story that for her money began on P. 3. She called the agent, who sent the report on to the author. The author wrote direct to Betty to explain that she felt the same way, but the agent thought the story needed a "build-up" to get it started!

Betty & Lew discussed at length the characteristic of "suspension" (tension), which Betty quickly noted is not the same thing as a "suspense story" (murder mystery or a deliberately formulated story accenting "suspense"). Lew said, "Any good story has this, a foreshadowing (planting) of things to come. It represents a reaching out of the mind of the reader."

This tension, mounting steadily, is a main ingredient of a story. It grows out of each dramatic conflict and feeling of tension between the characters. It develops from what we at WCS House speak of as reader participation in the story. Lew called it, a reader's sense of anticipation, "looking for, or fearing, the expected. Not the effect by which the reader is suddenly surprised by the unexpected." I have pointed out in REWRITE on several occasions that this quality of tension for the reader can take two forms: "(1) fear that something will happen; (2) a fear that something else won't happen." (This is the crux of the "tease" in every horse opera where there is a "chase" sequence, for example. The reader is made to split a gudgeon, before he finds out whether the hero is going to arrive in time to rescue the heroine or what-have-you.)

Betty said she is overstocked on stories, that tell reminiscences or which are about a child (Aug. 7th). Lew closed by saying that "Playmaking" by William Archer (out of print) and "The Summing Up" by W. Somerset Maugham, are the two books he depends on most.

It was a full morning of good talk by two professionals plainly eager to help others.

REWRITE

THIS MONTH'S NEW BOOKS

WILLA CATHER: A Memoir. Elizabeth S. Sergeant. J.B. Lippincott Co. \$3.50. A personal friend for nearly 40 years, she presents a critical yet admiring picture of Miss Cather. Understanding the novelist's great sensitivity & warm emotional idealism, she nonetheless regrets a dedication that put aside a personal life for the sake of her professional devotion and pleasure. Entertaining and valuable for its background knowledge and realistic analysis of a novelist's problems by a novelist. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

PUT IT PLAINLY. R.G. RALPH Thomas Y. Crowell \$2.50. This is not just one more book about forceful writing and faster reading. It offers some hard and sometimes sardonic studies in sound sentence construction. The author is a good teacher. Hence whoever reads this book, will come away a better writer. A WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection.

HOW TO BELIEVE. Ralph W. SOCKMAN. Doubleday & Co. \$2.50. The noted preacher has used the Apostle's Creed as a frame and the experience of many years of preaching to answer the often repeated questions of his listeners. A facile, yet frequently inspiring book.

COMMUNICATION: From Cave Writing to Television. Julie Forsyth Batchelor; Ill. by C.D. Batchelor. Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$2.50. Our Billy (age 8) took an immediate liking for a review copy of this book by a member of the NCS Family and her husband. A science book, it is fun. Through the media of sight & sound Julie has led child readers into an expanding world of time and place and history. It is today's world, too, with a natural development of modern high speed mechanical methods of transferring ideas. A child's book, with pictures, quizzes, and an index! What more can Billy and his friends possibly ask for?

HUE & CRY. Elizabeth Yates. Coward-McCann.. \$3.00. Miss Yates has returned to a younger generation of the Austin family, about whom she wrote in an earlier book. Her sensitive feeling for nature and love of horses is appealing. But a rather fantastic plot, which is none too clear and seems frequently to be rooted in the author's manipulation instead of the characterization, counteracts a good deal of the idealism and inspiration of the story.

DAY OF THE FALSE DRAGON. Alice Margaret Huggins. The Westminster Press. \$2.50. Here is a bold theme told simply and ingenuously. It is based on Miss Huggins' experience (three years under Communist rule and 4 months under house arrest). She taught at an American missionary school in North China for thirty-five years. The very simplicity of the author's round robin letters about conditions before the Bamboo Curtain prevented these being written and smuggled out. Miss Huggins, we're proud to say, is a NCS Family member.

A BOOK "IDEA" AND OTHER NEWS

Benn Hall, the publicist for books, gives it as his opinion that there is "large market for low-price 'older' juveniles, for the various groups between the ages of, say, 9 to 15." He thinks that "there is a richness of Juveniles for the very, very young set." A lot of junior novels also have been written in the past decade or more. Benn defines it even more specifically as follows: "paper-bound, low-priced juveniles, reprints or originals, or both, selling between 25¢ & 50¢, without illustrations".

My only comment to this is that such a division is likely to put the neatly "departmentalized" minds of many editors, and in the buying field, librarians and teachers, in a tizzy. They divide the field into the small tots, the 7 to 10 group and the 'teen agers. There are minor variations of these ages of course, but by and large these are the main categories.

Adults, though, (parents and teachers and relatives and friends) would probably shout with joy at this saving on budgets. They're the folk with money to spend in this bracket.

PAYING POETRY MARKETS. Virginia Randall.. \$2.00. About the best list of profitable poetry markets that we know. The second "edition" (it is continually expanding with the special revisions sent out to those on Miss Randall's mailing list) now carries 515 markets. Unique and well worth the price. (It counts as a WRITERS' BOOK CLUB purchase towards a Book Dividend.) We have copies.

WRITERS ON WRITING. Ed. Herschel Brickell. \$3.00. Handbook by members of the staff, the University of N. H. Writers' Conference, in which Bill has two chapters.

Mrs. Edith F. Ostryee, CHRISTIAN AUTHORS' GUILD, has partially recovered from surgery on a knee that was at first mistakenly considered to be suffering from arthritis. Her excellent book, "WRITING FOR CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS", (\$3.00) is doing well. We recommend it. It was a WRITERS' BOOK CLUB Selection when published. We have copies ready.

The National Grange and the Am. Plant Food Council are sponsoring a Conservation Essay Contest for writers under 21. National Cash Awards and a trip to the Grange Convention, for 6 regional winners, are possibilities & prizes of \$50 and \$25 for regional winners, in addition to the big prizes of \$500, \$250 \$200 and \$100 will be awarded. Consult Subordinate Grange or school authorities nearest you. "Building Fertility to Cut Farm-Costs" is this year's theme. Closes: March 31, 1953.

The Hall of Fame. More authors than any of the other professions including statesman in this group. So, keep your chin up! Write!

REWRITE

THE FICTION WORKSHOPS

There were only 5 entries in the Dramatic Story Opening. apparently summer is an outdoor season when many distractions interfere with workshops. I am disappointed because I consider the opening of a story the element that is most essential and usually hardest to do effectively. Too many writers assume that it is easy to do. I think we learned differently when we studied those three openings, which I reprinted in issue or two back. The average story stands or falls, so far as an acceptance is concerned, on the opening. It sells the editorial reader, and he continues reading with interest, or merely makes routine check. And if he likes the story inevitably he goes back to the opening. It will often clinch a decision one way or the other where a reader is doubtful. So, it is important to make the opening good.

Here is the Opening I have chosen. In my opinion it offers some excellent opportunities for editorial criticism, i.e., reasons why an editor would reject the story as implied in the opening. It also gives writers some good chances for constructive, creative revision suggestions. So, please go it!

STORY OPENING

Holly turned her ring twice around before she answered. Then she shook back her curls and smiled at Florence.

"Maybe I am foolish, but I'm not the fair weather type. When I got engaged to Dave, I meant it for keeps."

Florence was looking around the apartment, seeing the bird cage full of plants, the cuckoo clock, the ruffled curtains.

"Cute place you got here, honey - just like you."

"Soldiers are fickle, Holly. When they come back they've outgrown the old girl. They want somebody new. Now I'm not watching my life go up in smoke. I'm going to have fun, and friends, be ready for a new flame, if I lose the old -- love insurance, you know--"

Holly laughed. "You get some other girl for your foursome tonight."

"I'll stop by at seven. Remember it's that home talent show. a lot of the girls are in it. You don't want to be a draft widow dragging along with one of your neighbors do you?"

Marjorie McClellan Flint

Next Workshop. "My Most Unforgettable Character". Draw us a picture in about 150 words and on a separate sheet of paper suggest the way you think you could or would like to use him in print. No length limit on this side comment. Remember: send a constructive comment on Mrs. Flint's opening with each work-

shop entry. You can enter as many as you desire. Urge other writers to contribute. The "unforgettable character" workshop closes on Jan. 10th.

Comments on this Story Opening may be entered earlier, in time for the Nov. Dec. issue (closes Nov. 10th). I will give you the necessary credit when your own workshop ms. comes in, if you will remind me. Help us to help you. Give us a lot of unforgettable people! Remember: \$1 is paid for each ms. used.

The criticisms of Bill Heusinkveld's scenario were all too complimentary. Bill, when he was here, agreed, I think, that the characterization was thin. That he was more interested in the buffalo hunting background, with its color and detail, than in the story. Result: he characterized the two men and the girl vaguely from the outside. He didn't develop the details of his plot or know much about the characters. So, they were types.

The criticism you give other mss. is good for you. It makes you more critical and observing. It makes you think more about your own stories and their shortcomings. Compare the workshop pieces with published stories. Find where each excels and why. Really do a job of homework. It will benefit you a lot. Many of the comments that come in are superficial and naive. They show little serious, sustained thinking about the subject. In a year or two we ought to be able to raise up the standards of the workshops considerably. Let's try hard.

Of the other openings that were submitted one or two were interesting, but not usable because they did not give much chance for a stimulating discussion. One had a very serious structural weakness. The MC, listening to a conversation about herself that she is not supposed to hear, does not hold a reader very strongly with her problem. That is too easy a device, and the author makes it a still weaker one by explaining why the MC's shoes do not make any noise as she comes into the place where the conversation is taking place. Strengthening a weak device this way never increases the plausibility. Quite the contrary, it alerts the reader to its inherent weakness. As the old saying is in the game of diplomacy: tell a good lie, or don't at all.

Another story dealt with the problem of a man who could break the tie vote of a jury. (Incidentally, don't juries in most of this country's courts have only 12 members and 2 alternates, not thirteen?) The author stepped in and in two or three expository statements set up the opening step of the plot.

An otherwise excellent opening with a scientific background, missed fire because the author used too many general statements. I did not know soon enough what the story was all about. Remember, the reader starts with nothing. You have to tell him—in a story.

REWRITE

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT JUVENILES

The juvenile field offers perhaps as good an example of the kind of "narrowing down", that every writer has to practice, as any of the many types of writing that free lancers engage in. In other words, you have a rough idea what you want to write about. You look around for an editor and an audience likely to be receptive. By a process of selective, or eliminatory, decisions, you square off a target. Then you start to write. You write purposefully this way; you control your enthusiasms and channel them into a narrow or constricted area, so as to give them an opportunity to hit the reader with more emphasis and greater impact. It is the difference between spraying the whole garden with fine diffused mist and really soaking down every tomato plant one by one all around the roots and giving them personal attention.

There are exceptions of course to a theoretical generalization such as this. Those fortunate writers, for instance, who have a continuous market, or editor taking one continued type of material month after month & year after year. (Sometimes these men & women are not so fortunate. They get into the well known rut and eventually go stale.) But even these writers have at one time eliminated and intensified their efforts within a circumscribed, sharpened focus.

Then there are the writers who reverse the steps in this "ladder" of achievement. Perhaps they start with a market they think is within their reach and deliberately "dream" up a similar ms. they believe an editor will accept. In a word, they recognize limits of form and idea, then try to be original within those bounds. Or, again, there is a certain type of writer who prefers to create a subject all his own, develop it in his own, his unique way, and only then look for markets and, if necessary, shape and make compromises. This is a harder way, but it sometimes guarantees a high degree of integrity.

But let us see how this "narrowing down", in the juvenile field, works. Suppose that the author has material he believes will be of some interest to a child. He asks himself: (1) Shall I tell it as fiction or a feature article? (2) For boys and/or girls? (3) In each case what age group? Sunday School or non-denominational? (4) Single, serial or in how many parts? (5) Top market or one of the secondaries? (6) What length will be best? A good many other questions could be asked along the way, but these are the most important.

A skilled writer for children knows quite a good deal about the general characteristics of his field, possibly more than do authors for adults do about their media and readers. He or she knows, for example, that the real three basic types of material used are fiction, features and fillers, with the emphasis in the latter on Things to Do. Visualiza-

tion and the ability to write in conjunction with pictures or diagrams is important. If you can make the child "see" an idea, he is much more likely to understand it. A child also likes to identify himself even more in everything he reads with the people, & what goes on, than grown-ups. For instance, Billy re-enacts in his play almost every new setting he visits. A day or two after our first summer supper at the "hut" operated by Worcester Chapter of the Appalachian Mt. Club, the neighboring kids started a new tree hut in one of our apple trees.

Poetry is of course a special feature and you will see much of it scattered through a good many of the children's magazines. Here again one should remember to visualize, because an artist is often called in to weave an attractive background of line and color. The verse should be gay and full of excellent rhymes, and happy, swinging rhythms. An author should try hard to recall the memorable times and events of youth, and give to them the accent of naturalness as well as a thrilling emphasis made possible by singing verse.

There is a distinction between the religious and sectarian magazines for children. A writer would do well to face it squarely. On the other hand while there are comparatively few of the lay magazines and a great many of the Sunday School papers, no readers demand exactly the same type of material, although at first glance it may seem much the same everywhere. Certain of the large papers do buy not only for themselves, but for the smaller denominations to whom they resell & as a result pay the authors subsequent royalty checks (usually small amounts, but welcome nonetheless).

Two corollaries develop from this. First, it should be automatic, but seldom is, for a writer to "study the book" carefully. The editors of most denominational papers favor writers in this respect by usually offering to send samples of their various magazines, either gratis, or for a few stamps to cover postage. (The subscription price of most is so ridiculously low that a writer could afford to subscribe to those he wishes to keep actively in touch with. And changes of editors or policies do frequently occur.)

Second, in no other field is it so important for a writer to know his editors' reputation. Naturally, it is vital to do this, when a thousand dollars hangs on a decision. But it is even more important when, as it is in the juvenile field, the word rate is often low and payment is on publication. Some writers whom I know, continue, year on year, to beat their brains out doing very short & unprofitable mss. for low grade S.S. papers that hold mss. a year or more. They should, of course, aim at the better 1¢ a word, and better, markets that pay on acceptance or in a shorter time. And when they find an editor who likes them they should try serials.

NEWS NOTES AND AN ARTICLE WORKSHOP

Yale Series of Younger Poets, Yale University, New Haven, Conn., will be open in the month of February, 1954, for the 52nd competition for a book ms. by a poet under forty years of age. Daniel G. Hoffman, instructor in English at Columbia University, won this year. W. H. Auden, English poet is editor.. Now is the time to get ready.

The Island LANTERN, inmate publication of the U.S.Penitentiary, McNeil Island, Wash., began in its summer issue publication of an excellent poetry project. Each month an unforgettable classic will be reprinted. John Masefield's "Sea Fever" was selected by the editor, Larry Meyers, to lead off.

PARENTS' INSTITUTE, Geo. J. Hecht., pub., 52 Vanderbilt Ave., NYC 17, has started the PARENTS' Magazine Book Club for Children. It offer new books as well as those published, in other editions, at a uniform price (this will be \$1.47).

New magazines started within 3 years are: CHILDREN'S DIGEST, HUMPTY DUMPTY, POLLY PIG-TAILS, and PIGGITY'S ANIMAL STORY Magazine.

FAMILY LIFE, MacFadden publication, is no longer in the market. Returns mss. with rejection slip announcing its "suspension".

The International P.E.N. Bulletin of Selected Books, an international book review that was subsidised by UNESCO, is now, beginning its 4th year, standing on its own feet. To subscribe, American readers should send the fee of \$2 to the New Mexico Quarterly, University of N. M., Albuquerque, N. M. Others may send 11/6 to International P.E.N., 62 Glebe Place, London, S.W.3, England. Excellent for those interested in modern literatures.

John E. Pember recently quoted in my presence a memorable image. "A man's life is like walking beside a river. In youth he idles & wonders how any stream can possibly dawdle so slowly. As he enters man's estate, he finds it necessary to walk more briskly. In middle age he lengthens his stride and 'economizes' his breath and efforts. In old age he is seized with panic as he realizes he must run madly, wildly just to keep up, and even so, the current, now a surging, brutally irresistible force, slowly forces ahead, despite his best effort, leaving him a panting old man far behind. Wisdom and courage, indeed, are required of creators, who wish to strike a dignified compromise with Time."

MORE ABOUT THE MAINE CONFERENCE. The difficulty with conferences is that you cannot be everywhere at the same time. I had hoped that Elva could be at Ocean Park this year, to help me report all the activities. ACS & family business prevented. A new innovation this year was a series of workshops.

In a small, but exciting, workshop on article writing at the Maine Conference, Dick Merrifield, editor of YANKEE, Bill and Charley Rawlings worked with a fine bunch of inexperienced and more experienced writers. To start the ball rolling, Dick made the careful distinction between commercial and literary article writing. (You remember Walter Pitkin put a title on his very useful book, "The Art of Practical Writing", \$3.50.)

Rawlings, always the practical guy, asked some of the writers present to suggest some possible subjects for good features. Someone thought up "bees," since we had a professional bee-keeper in our midst. We proceeded to kick the idea around from all angles. I suggested we should consult the inescapable Readers' Guide, available in most public libraries. Then we thought about selling the article "big", to a top national market, say the READERS' DIGEST or a large slick. Then, working down the ladder, we considered other and more specialized markets, farm magazines, newspapers, hobby magazines. And we compared proposed results with actual articles some of us had seen and read.

A considerable definition period developed. We checked off different types of writing in the non-fiction field, including the column reporting ("correspondence") in rural areas, from which a good feature can often be picked up; straight feature stories, news features (keyed to the news or current events); feature historical or biographical articles of general interest; seasonal & repeatable articles that may be written every so often, etc. A lot of good experience material that illustrated practical application of these categories, spilled out from practically all the members of the group. (As an example one woman told how from a rejection by a Canadian magazine she developed a column about fishing and hunting, to which she signs a man's by-line.) This kind of swapping of personal experience is something the members of any club or group can easily do.

Charley Rawlings discussed frankly several ideas he had had difficulty in handling. In particular a current story that both as a feature and fiction story had "failed", and of his plans to keep it alive for further development. His methods of working up material both as feature and fiction stories, depending on technical or marketing problems, and his own interest in the background, people and events, proved illuminating. Quite a bit of discussion on the value of feature writing as a preliminary, or later off-shoot from fiction, germinated. The matter of making extensive travel and research thus "pay off" was discussed.

Doris Marston introduced the problem of a camera vs. an accompanying camera-man. Rawlings showed the difficulties of winning the confidence of people and getting a true perspective when one's saddled with a camera-man loaded with too much equipment. He prefers

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to go it alone, find the story, with all of its color and feel. Then go back with a man to shoot the illustrative material. Wisely, Doris stressed the economy and better check likely to follow the small free lance, when he can do his own art work. Altogether, this was a busy and profitable workshop. Dick expressed hope that another year a discussion of the literary article and essay might get included in the tightly packed schedule. A good idea, although this one clearly filled a need for those present.

The DURHAM CHAP BOOK. Each summer REWRITE and AMERICAN WEAVE sponsor an award for the best folio of poems presented at the Conference held at the Univ. of N. H. This year Loring Williams, a member of the staff (for the first time, although he has been giving distinguished and faithful service for many years), selected as prize winner Ralph Kinsey of Navarre, Ohio.

We congratulate this poet and look forward to the publication of his folio, which Loring considers comparable to the best of the many chap books we have issued. It is a royalty publication.

U.S. Government Printing Office, Roy B. Eastin, Sup't. of Documents, Washington, D.C.... How many writers realize that there are approximately 70,000 books & booklets in this biggest publishing firms list? Many are free or obtainable for a few pennies. If you are looking for subjects, or background material, it is an inexhaustible storehouse. Ask for a list covering your subject, or a guide to miscellaneous subjects.

Possible Revision of Postal Rates. It is practically certain that the next session of Congress will see another attempt to up the present postage rates. Tonight's newspapers carried a bulletin that the Senate's special committee on postal matters now has under advisement a 5¢ rate on 1st class matter to be mailed to cities. That is neither workable nor constitutional probably, but it indicates how business mail and your mss. may be penalized. It will hurt you hard!

The greatest single reason for a Post Office Department deficit is the Department's biggest customer, the Government, that pays nothing for the service given it. If all of the waste, and abuses of free mailing, were controlled even partially, you would find a very big drop in the annual deficit was almost sure to result. It seems to REWRITE before further increases are levied on paying customers, who happen to be taxpayers, too, the Government should clean house, and do it right across the board.

We suggest that if you have ideas on this subject, or feel strongly about it, you can write to your representatives in Congress & to the respective committees in the House & Senate (your representatives can tell you to whom to write.) It will help a great deal if writers' clubs adopt resolutions, too. Fight!

ACTIVITIES AT WCS HOUSE

The end of summer was a busy time for us at WCS House. The week following the Maine Conference Bill Heusinkveld arrived from Denver, to study with us intensively for almost a week. A few hours after he departed "Bob" Shaw, Bill's classmate and now affectionately known as "Pop" to the students and graduates of Solebury School, of which he is the headmaster in New Hope, Pa., arrived for an abbreviated week-end visit. And all through August a continuing stream of mss. swept in and out. As we go to press there has seemed to be no let up. It is gratifying to be able to advise so many writers.

Members of the WCS Family did well in the annual Writer's DIGEST Short Short Story awards. Edward W. Ludwig was third and Mary M. Peebles scored twelfth. Helen Langworthy also finished in the prize list.

On a warm September day we had a friendly visit from John E. Pember, who liked country living and a chance to talk shop so much he spent a night with us. We enjoyed it, too.

The following Saturday was Fair Day here, and Elva and Grandma Ray brought home a total of 12 ribbons for canning exhibits. As it probably should be, Grandma led Elva by a safe margin of three to one on the blue ribbons, but Elva got a generous supply of red seconds. And Billy drew a second on his miniature watermelon. They've tasted good during the hot weather. Bill was content to see two of his peach trees bear for the first time and get a good harvest on his first crop of potatoes. Digging in the good earth is a rewarding contrast to much headwork and finger tapping on typewriters. Besides, there's time for quiet ruminating, and occasionally "copy" to be found on our sunny acre.

On one cool September morning Jean Ramsey having called the night before, left on our doorstep 17,000 words of ms. on her way from Maine to the Penn Hall School, where she is teacher of Play Production. While she & her two companions picnicked in the Willard Brook State Park, Bill read furiously and the family lunched quickly. Two hours and 15 short minutes from the time the car drove up, Bill laid down the last sheet of ms., as it paused again beside our mailbox, and there followed a 2-hour personal conference.

WCS Scholarship Fund. Our fund for handicapped and shut-in writers received \$10.00, recently, from a writer who wishes to remain anonymous. The Fund has been very active in bringing REWRITE and WCS help to many writers this year. Although the Fund's help has never been construed as an obligation, writers frequently accept such assistance as a temporary means of tiding themselves over a crisis and repay part or all of the scholarship given to them. In such cases the money goes back into the Fund and is available to help a second and sometimes third or fourth writer! Our friends and we like it that way.

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A NOVEL TO STUDY FOR POINTS

Both of us recently read "The High and the Mighty" by Ernest K. Gann, a novel. It isn't great literature, but is suspensive and you writers can learn a lot from studying it as a piece of very competent writing. In fact, there are several lessons to be learned. If Mr. Gann had a higher regard for humans, or knew as much about their finer motives as he does about their cracking point under heavy strain, it would be an even more memorable, and probably more lasting book of literary, as against mere entertainment, value.

The first point is the extreme wealth and power of his documentation. He knows planes and how they operate. Although one notices, as the illusion wears thin, that his conditions or premises are carefully planted, so that the story will develop exactly as he desires, the factual description of the hour-to-hour movement of a great airliner is superbly drawn. It is almost like a lesson in flying.

The second point is the viewpoint. It is from the multiple angle point of view. And, for the most part, the reader is unaware of the author's hand always on the "stick". We pick up the narrative chapter-by-chapter as members of the crew or passengers watch the exciting events unfold. Inexperienced writers will find the handling of the reflecting and emotional reaction a revelation. There's warmth and intimacy on the one hand and action on the other at all times. Yet characters reflect and think about the action for pages on end. The point is it is "dramatic" reaction and response to all that is happening.

The distinction may seem a subtle one, but writers should study until they fully understand it. The action is at all times moving forward. The two-way relations between people and what destiny is doing to them keeps developing, growing, evolving into a story. The action never entirely stops while characters sit down by the side of the road in a rocking-chair and think about their drama.

The skill with which the line of interest is projected and quietly emphasized is what a writer-reader should observe under glass, until he can thoroughly appreciate it to the point where he can go and do likewise. Time figures prominently. By letting the readers watch chronological time run out, Mr. Gann's dramatic line of interest is made much more visible to the reader. The way he ends each chapter or unit thereof, and starts another scene is worthy of particular note. It can be argued the form is very tight, and possibly restrictive. But so is the interior of a great airliner. It well suits the tension & suspense quality of the material. It should not probably be used in every story. But the fundamental principle of telling a story in terms of action and character reaction & response instead of mere dull reflection and/or

author's description and, worse, explaining to the reader, all done outside the story's circle of illusion, is sound.

Finally, authors should pay attention to a device of style. There is hardly a "that" or a "which" in the whole book. The sentences are all simple, straight ones varying as to length. They are easy to read, yet have the dignity of good writing and the clarity and forward movement of pulp writing. They lack somehow that primitive, almost kindergartinish quality of bordering on illiteracy that the older pulp style used to impress upon a reader used to a more sophisticated style. A writer does not have to smudge his thoughts with a heavy hand. But this type of simple, clear writing that lends itself to dramatic story-telling is well worth careful study.

THE EXPERIENCE ROUND TABLE

Here is a tip we picked up recently from a client who formerly was a postal inspector. He stated that he never allows an important letter to be mailed without having a witness to its being placed in the mail. He follows this up quickly by sending an airmail letter with an airmail self-addressed return envelope, so that the recipient can acknowledge receipt or failure to receive the important piece of mail. This permits him to request a search soon enough to be effective.

Of course, if a piece of mail is very important, it is well to register it, because then it is checked in and out of every postal station along the way where it is given a new handling. Ordinarily, in the case of a ms. of which the author possesses a carbon or second original copy, this is not necessary. But there are valuable mss. containing special information that neither the author nor editor wishes to have tampered with or mislaid, where registration of the package may be a wise precaution.

POETRY, Karl Shapiro, 1020 Lake Shore Dr., Chicago 11, Ill., carries two columns, "Lectures and Publications", and "Little Magazines Abroad", which contain information poets interested in the more literary aspects of their field should not miss scanning.

One way to get into print is pin-pointed, and quite explicitly, too, by a book issued by Thomas Y. Crowell Co. Peggy Iris Thomas, a young English girl with only \$60 and an over-size dog took a 26,000-mile motorcycle ride through the United States after 2½ years of similar travel in Europe. "Gasoline Gypsy", an account of her adventures followed inevitably, or nearly so. She had made herself, you see, a unique personality with a fairly important, colorful and perhaps newsworthy arresting story. I have had friends, who have framed up deliberately the backgrounds for similar books. They can represent a one-book escapade, or they can lead to a series and even to a career of successful reporting or more serious writing. It's up to you.

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TRIBUTE TO A FINE CRAFTSMAN

Here is an interesting publicity release, that passed across our desk recently. About the late Ben Ames Williams. The comment was made by Louise H. Guyol, New Orleans writer and newspaperwoman, who assisted Mr. Williams in his research for his last novel, "The Unconquered".

"It was as delightful a year as I have experienced in all the 75 years I have lived," says Miss Guyol. "I supplied him with 'volumes' of material and the wonder of his book truly is that he has encompassed in one sentence what took me hours, sometimes days, to find, and filled innumerable typed sheets. He read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested it, so that the facts are back to us in a short paragraph, maybe just a line. And that is the essence of a good historical novel."

That is perhaps the sweetest compliment a writer can ever have handed to him. We had a long letter recently from Louise, who besides doing research and writing free lance uses her typewriter to recruit volunteer assistants for community social work in N. O. She is an old Boston TRANSCRIPT writer. It is rather surprising how many big name writers learned to write on Boston papers. Williams on the AMERICAN, Kenneth Roberts as a POST man, John Marquand on the TRANSCRIPT & Katherine Brush on the HERALD-TRAVELER are a few. They all knew when to quit.

SOME MARKET NOTES

THE LITERARY MARKET PLACE. Anne J. Richter. H. R. Bowker Co. \$4.50. 13th edition of this invaluable directory of American book, magazine and allied industries. With a few minor exceptions the names of agents, editorial services and publishers listed are among those recognized for professional reputation. In spite of their extravagant advertising, you won't find vanity presses or critic-agents listed here, a fairly accurate estimate of their lack of value to you. Mrs. Richter each year expands and improves succeeding editions. For copies, address as above: 62 West 45th ST., NYC 36.

Rebecca Phillips commented recently about the changes she has noticed in the C.S. MONITOR, 1 Norway St., Boston, Mass. "It's no longer just an American newspaper. It's more than ever international. (The READERS' DIGEST is going the same way.) There are so many editors and departments to whom you may submit various types of ms." She mentioned especially Mr. Thorsen of the "Family Features".

There is a good point in Rebecca's comment that many writers do not take time to think about. How many magazines or newspapers are read by you regularly? How often do you examine careful over a series of issues, when you submit a ms.? How many times do you in your daily (?) study of magazines find yourself catching changes of style, format, and subject-matter? Do you take them for granted?

A MAGAZINE FOR POETS AND OTHER NEWS

THE POETRY PUBLIC, Lawrence R. Holmes, Chadron, Nebraska. The first copy of this small mimeo publication that we have seen recently crossed our desk. Commenting on an earlier note we ran the editor wrote: "Our main function is to help improve the reading ability of persons interested in poetry, both in verse and in literary criticism, always with a view of orienting the public toward the best." (July issue was Vol. I, Letter 7.)

That is a very worthy aim. It is the biggest problem facing poets and editors. How to build a reading public that will sustain or help to finance the publication of good poetry. Bill had several long conversations at Ocean Park during the Maine Writers' Conference with folk like Loring Williams, Christian Sheldon about the economics and the art of it. Elva and I debated it at length when I returned. The poet should not be expected to pay to have his poems printed. But neither should the editor and publisher be expected to give their services away for free. I frankly do not know what the answer is. But I believe some answer must be developed. Or the "vanity" presses will continue to bleed poets dry, and magazines that have low quality standards, will publish the work of the poet willing to subscribe in exchange for a certain expectation that his poems will get into print.

Mr. Holmes is more concerned with forging an intelligent, a sympathetic and appreciative public. But he, too, realizes the necessity for an effective means of preserving good poems singly and in book form. His publication conducts a stimulating discussion. Poets take an active part. Somewhat the way they do in Elva's Workshops. Indeed, a number of the WCS Family are in there pitching "Subscribers pay \$1 a year for the Letters, issued monthly. Contributing Members join by invitation and pay \$2 for the privilege of: participating in the monthly discussions, receiving the Letters and voting for officers and on policies. Contributing Membership invitations are extended for having had a notable poem or poetry critique published; or for having made other valuable contributions to the poetry art." On the basis of one issue it sounds good. We are exchanging publications with Mr. Holmes. More comment later

"Best American Short Stories of 1953" ed. Martha Foley, is being published this year, Aug. 18th was the release date, in a paper-bound edition as well as hard cover. Good!

The Federal Trade Commission has ordered: The American Extension School, Portland, Ore, must stop implying by the use of the words, "University" and "Extension" that it is the equivalent of a resident institution of higher learning. Also a long list of mis-representations must be stopped. Readers would do well to note the limitations on use of such characterizing words as the above. They are frequently misused in advertising.

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SHALL I WRITE FOR SLICKS OR...?

The answer to this question of course is & has to be a personal one for each individual writer. But there can be some generalizing about it. In this article I want to make no invidious distinctions. I enjoy thoroughly most generally recognized great writing. On the other hand I admire and respect that craftsmanship displayed by some commercial, or slick, writers. Elva and I are considered "good" in our profession when we help any writers to sell or place their stuff. We're "no good" when we fail in this respect, whether it is our fault or some weakness in an author's material, his treatment of it, or even his personal approach to writing.

In another column we have quoted a popular writer on the mutual antipathy between Park Ave. and belles lettres. It is my personal feeling that there has been too much emphasis on this distrust. A good story is a good story any time and in any place, as witness our good friend and REWRITE subscriber, Jim Connolly, the great sea story writer, who in an earlier day, like Charley Rawlings, kept his by-line in the big slicks (COLLIER'S is one of them) and at the same time wrote for SCRIBNER'S.

I want to quote two extremes. One of our clients quoted me as saying to her that she could "some day write for slicks, if she in her apprenticeship could learn what sort of story they wanted and write it as they like it." (I did not mean, of course, slavish imitation, but practical, creative originality within the bounds of an editor's requirements.) Against this she also quoted the editor of a fine experimental magazine now defunct, which was published by an outstanding small college. He told her in so many words that he felt that one of the surest ways to ruin a potentially talented writer, was for him to try to write for the slicks. (Now it happens that he and I are good friends, and much of our published writings about effective fiction writing are close in agreement as to fundamental form and treatment. I often quote him on these two subjects.)

At the other extreme, this summer a large ms. was sent to me for my report by a business house, publisher of good books. It was a book on writing by an important slick editor whose name I am not yet at liberty naturally to mention. Commenting on the rather universal feeling that the substance of magazine fiction is not always as high quality as it might and should be, she said: "There is nothing wrong with commercial fiction that a few good story-tellers could not change."

Now there are literary writers and others who find their satisfaction in writing commercial fiction for the slicks. Temperament plays a big part in dividing writers across a wide prism. Some are extroverts, some introverts. Some like people, others are more interested in form or technique. Some like

ideas, while others are willing to serve as writers wherever their bent can carry their mss. And a few, I regret to say, cultivate a snobbishness which is not quite the same, please understand, as that mutual distrust, or even working contempt, with which we began as a sighting point. Bill Heusinkveld, when he was studying with us this summer, amusingly quoted to us the dictum of a director of a Western university summer seminar, who said that he would not accept the money that the SAT. EVE. POST pays for a first story. "Do you suppose," wondered Bill whimsically, "whether he ever could write that kind of a story?"

To understand the differences that separate quality, slick and secondary writers or editors, one must have a keen awareness for the differences in their readers. Literary magazines, as I understand it, appeal to the literate few for whom an intellectual interest of one kind or another is of primary importance. Readers in the secondary markets, which include the lower paying magazines as well as all the various specialized fiction markets, such as grocery chain magazines, religious, farm and home magazines, regional, house organs, etc., are half-way between the quality and slick groups. They draw upon the two extremes. They have larger circulations than the quality magazines, less than slick magazines. They tend to be less sophisticated intellectually and emotionally than either of their neighbors.

The slicks on the other hand appeal to the widest possible readership. Those who desire only entertainment and emotional refreshment read them. But so do the well dressed, the more experienced and intelligent, the folk, in cities and small towns, who have the desire, the means and the curiosity to wander over a wide range of living. That is why you will find both good reading and very obvious and flimsy stories exposed often side by side. And why slicks though not noted for innovations, often make room for the exceptional.

Most important of all, it explains why in the slicks you find the distinction between the conventional and the off-trail story so sharply accented. More than either of their competitors, the slicks are required to program their contents, to have something in every issue for everybody. Like the old vaudeville shows, this sort of thing can easily, too easily become stylized and superficial. This is an era of terrific changes. The attempts to shake up certain old established, prestige books, the passing of others & the difficulty of finding a new form has readily been apparent in the slick field. Moreover, with such vast circulations and large house staffs, it is very easy to lose an enormous amount of money very quickly. One issue of a big slick can represent an investment or a turn-over of close to \$1,000,000.

Something that few writers think seriously about is the tremendous amount of prepar-

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ation that goes into both the writing & the editing of a slick. Either may be good or as bad as anyone can make it. But a lot of time and energy has gone into the end-result just the same. And as a consequence slick editors try to reach the different segments of their readership with precision, not vaguely. It may be that some of their methods, the surveys of types of readers and age groups and those with the buying power, are controversial and open to question. But they try hard to get results as they see them.

Then there is that matter of topical, and timely urgency. The slicks, far more than the secondaries and the literary books, reflect the headlines. News. Now that a new book by Kinsey on sex and woman's relation to it is hanging fire, you will see a lot of stories news-pegged to it. (Last night Eddie Cantor scrapped his winter's schedule to make a unique broadcast built around the appeal of a prisoner pfc. just released from Korea to be brought up to date on "Show Business". That was a natural for human interest. It explains in part why Eddie has been a top attraction for more than 30 years.) The slicks try always to keep their fingers and heart attuned as closely and as sympathetically to the emotions of their readers.

Finally, however empty you may think some slicks are at times, they do require for the most part skilled writing and craftsmanship; there are always exceptions, I know. I believe I proved that in the August issue, by discussing those three openings we reprinted. So that brings us back to those two examples of "preparation" I mentioned above. I have worked on a lot of accepted, published slick stories. I know that even by professionals they are not merely written and then accepted as is. As Charley Rawlings told us at Ocean Park, they are "ideas" that an author develops provisionally, then tailors to fit a "hole" as visualized by an editor, or sometimes revised to suit an agent's uncanny sense of "box-office". None of which necessarily needs to cheapen a writer's art. It can often refine it, sharpen a beautiful or tender feeling for human emotions.

Few writers realize that sometimes a life time of writing apprenticeship has gone into the preparation of a writer before he is selling to a slick. That "lifetime" may be a long or short, intensive lifetime. I happen to know that of the authors of those 3 openings we used, two are women who were exposed to a lot of living before they started a career of writing. The other is a mature woman with a long background of practical experience in the theater.

That client of ours whom I quoted ventured the suggestion that perhaps she was not, vocation or temperament, a natural slick fiction writer. She feels that her ideas maybe are more suited to literary stories. That's entirely possible. I am working with several other writers, who wish to switch or pro-

gress into slick fiction. At least one is a seasoned, successful writer in her own field of writing. Yet she, too, is experiencing a good deal of difficulty in getting on slick targets.

After nearly 25 years of counselling writers I have learned the hard way that an author in my client's position must decide if it is her ideas, her temperament or craftsmanship that separates her from successful attack on slick markets. Any one or all may be the reason or reasons for failure. If a writer does not like slick stories from the beginning, it is fairly obvious she won't be a successful writer in this highly competitive field. If a writer's handling of humor or emotion differs radically from the normal, conventional type, I can usually tell a writer and show the fact by holding her ms. beside—examples of published stories.

But there is that basic matter of craftsmanship. A writer may not be able to do the slick type of fiction because she does not: (1) write (use words) well enough yet. And (2) again she may not handle scenes skilfully enough. Now it is at this point that the writer must face up honestly to his, or her, own problem. A teacher, like a psychiatrist, cannot help a writer who is unwilling to admit the truth.

I have seen many writers run away from the problem and save face by saying "I am a literary writer", or "I don't like the straight-jacket artificialities of the slicks." The real truth of the matter is that such writers are unwilling or unable to do the hard, painstaking observation, practice and thinking necessary to become the kind of writer, who can ultimately hit the slicks, if he is careful enough to "study the book." Over a period of many years I have noticed that in 99% of the cases where I diagnose the problem as a lack of craftsmanship and technical ability, the writer fails to sell also in a literary or secondary market.

The point is that to sell any field it is necessary to write well. And the fundamentals of communication are pretty much the same in any type of writing or, for that matter, in any art. I remember discussing this with Charles H. Woodbury, the great marine painter. He knew exactly what I meant when I told him how I studied a new medium involving an audience new and strange to me. "You have to set yourself, the way I do when I try woodcarving. You have to transfer the universal principles and learn the special techniques of a new medium. It's like an expert rifleman gauging the new and unfamiliar conditions of a strange shooting range." That is true. Before a writer can say for sure whether he is or is not a slick writer, he must understand something of this universality of his craft. He must know, not guess, why he does not hit the target. He must be objective about it, not let feelings get mixed up in it. Nor evade the straight out problem he faces

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This does not mean that a writer needs to be hard-boiled or tough (character-trait, I regret to say, that seem to be held in high esteem in this nervous age of tensions, insecurities and frustrations). On the contrary, no writer ever succeeds, who grits his teeth and writes stories he does not like to do.

I happen to be of the school that is still optimistic enough to believe that slick stories can demand the best in thought & skill an imaginative writer can give to it. Moreover, I do not subscribe to the theory that a writer necessarily or inevitably "prostitutes his art" by practicing a type of writing different from (lower than, in his mind!) the kind he hopes eventually to master.

If one can pot-boil in the business world why can't he in the literary field, if only he does not remain too long, and thereby acquire bad habits as well as an awareness of sound fundamental construction and organization? I had a college roommate who collected ashes and garbage summers because it earned him more money for his law education. I was a securities "runner" and a city room reporter, although I loathed both jobs, because I understood dimly that they would help me to be a better all around writer. John Marquand and Booth Tarkington both served an apprenticeship in the slicks, yet they turned out fair novelists.

It may sound like a paradox, but I always have liked what Charles H. Woodbury used to say: that after 40 years of painting it did not matter a great deal whether an artist's technique was a little better than the next fellow's. The thing that mattered was if he observed life and people, had a liking (affection and compassion) for them, and, as a result, had something to say about them.

On a Canadian radio musical program (night or two ago), the m.c. told of studying composition under Paul Hindemith, German composer now at Yale. He glanced at the young man's opus when he presented it. "What did you think when you wrote this piece?" Hindemith asked him.

The student swelled up importantly. "I did not think, I felt," he announced.

"Oh, you felt." Hindemith glanced down at the sheets of music. "Try it again."

I am not a committed advocate of slick as against other types of writing. I know it is profitable. But Elva and I encourage any type of writing that a writer can make seem good in kind. But having worked on a large variety of stories that have sold to slicks, often on the second submission, I have learned to respect good slick writing. I believe trying to imitate what inexperienced writers think is slick writing, can injure an author's gift. But I also believe that making a sincere and serious try to write the best fiction one is capable of, and doing it within

the form and limitations set by slick editors, never hurt any writer. On the contrary, I am sure it has in practically every case, widened the outlook of the writer, made him more aware of his readers, and has matured, strengthened him as a writer. Except in rare instances, the task of growing up and learning to do a man's work is not easy or happy—in spite of what the philosophers say regarding carefree youth. Any child can report on that!

SOME NEWS OF MARKETS

FREE ENTERPRISE, Wm. Schmidt, man. edit., 2838 Addison, Chicago 18, Ill., is published monthly in the interests of Constitutional Government and property owners. Uses poetry along patriotic lines, historical, and of special interest to landlords. Does not now pay, reports WCS member, Alice Lazo.

David C. Cook Publishing Co., long a sectarian publisher of religious literature, is now owned by the David C. Cook Foundation for Religious Education, reported GOOD BUSINESS in its July issue.

The VINCENTIAN, Rev. Vincent G. Kaiser, C.M., 1849 Cass Ave., St. Louis 6, Mo. We had a note complimenting this Catholic publication on its excellent rejection slip giving its editorial requirements. It was set up & ready to be run, when a sad note from Fr. B. J. Cunningham, C. M., lit. ed., came, stating that "After 31 years of publishing, The VINCENTIAN will suspend publication following the December issue.

I am sorry to learn of this demise of one of the finer Catholic magazines, which paid 1½ to 2¢ per word for prose and 30¢ per line for poetry. The editors, too, who hoped to solve its problems, find the decision difficult to accept. However, it was made by the Provincial Superior. Readers, I believe, would do well to express in writing a sense of loss to the editors. It might do some good.

TOWN & COUNTRY, Henry B. Sell, 572 Madison Ave., NYC 22. I scented a market report in a rejection slip of this publication reading: "The editors regret they are unable to consider unsolicited mss. owing to a temporary change of policy."

Mr. Sell replying promptly, stated his appreciation of my reportorial sense, but added, "while I like to be helpful, I am unable to tell you anything more than appears on the slip, as now modified." It now reads: "TOWN & COUNTRY seldom uses mss. not—previously commissioned." Prospective writers for this Hearst publication would do well to study a number of issues, then query. Even so, it is a limited market.

The Federal Trade Commission in an initial decision has ordered: AMERICAN LABOR DIGEST to discontinue misrepresentations in soliciting advertisements.

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LINE OF INTEREST IS VITAL

Line of interest in a story which W. Somerset Maugham considers the most important, basic fundamental in any kind of writing, is probably where the largest number of would-be writers fall down. I think the reason is that very few textbooks or teachers explain what it is. Yet if the article, story, poem, or whatever it is, does not have continuity it lacks the ability to draw the reader in-to and through the piece.

I find that I think about this matter always in terms of visualization. For me, the good ms. either has continuity or it hasn't. And I can actually see the line of interest or the lack of it. To be able to understand this factor, a writer must be able to think in terms of intangibles. Although very simple, line of interest demands a feeling for structure, composition and logic. The writer must be able to visualize how the "form" of a story is put together. It isn't enough to speak in generalities of a beginning and a middle and then an end. One must "see" the specific bones and veins that tie the several sections of the body together. A really good story is indeed a work of art. It's more than the sum of bone and blood and muscle—it's the complex mechanism of all the parts functioning as one.

Planting and foreshadowing are the root of much of this artistry. A surprise ending is not just tacked on in the last 100 words or less. It is prepared for and the actual revelation held back until the right moment by the proper handling of the ideas and words, all through the narrative. For many years I have started every feature article at a high point and then finished it with a contrasting snapper that grows out of the same material. In a sense I have brought the reader's mind full circle back to where it started—a device to give a feeling of completeness.

But between these two islands or supports for my bridge there is a series of step-like stone foundations on which the reader moves forward. The topic sentences of successively placed paragraphs guide the reader along this continuity. If you left out the detail between, these topic sentences would nevertheless connect with each other just as the blazes on a trail do. The reader's mind can follow them just as clearly and visually.

Let's look at the same thing in fiction. I have told here in REWRITE several times the story about the little boy who wished to go to a winter carnival, but he had promised a holiday "thank you" visit to an old lady on the same day. The author presented: (1) the boy; (2) his problem; (3) his discussion of it with his mother; (4) with his boyfriend; (5) with a doctor on his way to the carnival. Then (6) his decision to forego the fun in order to fulfill his promise. The fact he would miss seeing a great ski-jumper is repeatedly planted. (7) But he goes anyway to

see the old lady; (8) he finds she is sick; (9) the famous skier has jumped and now enjoying a few moments of skiing, appears and volunteers to return by the quick and dangerous way to bring the doctor. (10) the boy's imagination is stirred by "having his cake" after all and watching the great skier demonstrate his skill; (11) The next day boy's doctor friend tell him that his "right" decision may have saved the old lady's life.

Each of these steps is arranged in an orderly sequence that would be disturbed were the sequence changed. Note, too, the logic, the step-by-step closing of the "argument", as contrasted with the physical action, is a line of interest also. (I have purposely omitted one small plan. Stop at this point & see if you can spot it.)

The answer of course is that there was the long way and the short way to the old lady's home. If the boy took the former, he'd miss the carnival by the time he returned. And a boy like him could not negotiate the short, dangerous way. Thus did the author warn the reader that the famous jumper might be skiing where the boy could use and see him.

A curious thing in this regard is a famous story by O.Henry. If you reread "The Gift of the Magi" you will find that the order of the events cannot be changed. The story doesn't work out right if the boy returns home earlier than the wife. Her hair must be cut so she can obtain the fob for his watch & only then can the author disclose that the watch has been sold to buy combs for the wife's hair. To reverse the sequence is to achieve an anticlimax.

Continuity is a very complicated thing. A writer of humor spends hours in getting the right chain of ideas from the springboard to the snapper. One misstep is often fatal. In the same way the story-teller uses many artistic devices to enhance his line of interest, to build up the picture quality of it. I recall how in John Galsworthy's play "Loyalties" in the first three or four scenes one new and larger loyalty was introduced to the audience in each succeeding scene, thus expanding the theme step by step. The very locale of the scenes emphasized this device.. Similarly in a novelette by Isabel Moore the line of interest was heightened by using the three viewpoints of the three main characters in carefully planned blocks.

The use of contrasting flashback, separating scenes in the present, is another device that has its uses. In novels division of the main story into books or chapters visualizes the "steps" of the line of interest. When a sequence in time as well as in space is developed, you get movement. Thus line of interest's purpose is to move the reader over the spread of Time, Space, and Ideas and Emotions. Always there are alternatives yesterday-today; here-there; good-bad; writers try to chart a course between them .